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## I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to support the emergency preparedness goals of the state to ensure the safety and welfare of Louisiana residents during emergencies/disasters.

In addition, the policy defines the Department's role and responsibilities in carrying out the emergency functions for managing, staffing, and coordinating mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services when people are forced to leave their homes in actual or threatened emergencies and disasters.


DCFS and the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) are the two primary responsible agencies for Emergency Support Function (ESF) 6. DCFS has the primary responsibility for coordinating mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services; and LWC has the primary responsibility for coordinating mass feeding.

There are many types of events that may result in the implementation of this policy. Large-scale natural and technological disasters include such events as hurricanes, flooding, tornadoes, and hazardous material accidents.

Local government has overall responsibility to protect Louisiana residents during emergencies and disasters. However, some events, whether natural or technological, are of such severity or magnitude as to exceed or overwhelm the capability of local authorities to respond. In such events many state departments and agencies at the state level will supplement local response and recovery efforts.

When an emergency/disaster is declared, an evacuation order may be issued for the population of the affected area.

Evacuation is defined as the orderly removal of people from an area threatened by disaster to a place of safety. A hurricane is a likely reason for mass evacuation and presents the most intense evacuation scenario. The number of people requiring evacuation fluctuates with the size of the event and other factors such as weather. When people are evacuated from their homes, temporary shelters are provided through the coordinated efforts of many state and local agencies and voluntary organizations.

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## II. PROCEDURES

DCFS will accomplish its primary emergency responsibility for mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services through assignment of DCFS employees in the major operating units of the Department to work in shelters, assist in evacuations, and other emergency/disaster duties. These major operating units and their responsibilities are as follows:

### A. Child Welfare

In normal operations, Child Welfare employees provide the public child welfare functions of the state and administers the federal grants for services directed at meeting the special needs of Louisiana's most vulnerable residents.

In emergencies and disasters, Child Welfare employees will be assigned to locations as needed. In addition, Child Welfare will be responsible for routine and emergency social services to its clients. The Child Welfare employees will be responsible for staffing the Unaccompanied Minor Shelter as well as provide staff to assist with Unaccompanied Minors at each of the event sites.


### B. Economic Stability

In normal operations, Economic Stability plans, develops, and administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), all cash assistance programs, and the child support program in DCFS.

In emergencies and disasters, Economic Stability employees will be assigned to locations as needed. In addition, Economic Stability also provides special services during and following emergencies and disasters including dispensing of federal and state financial assistance and administering an amplified SNAP, known as the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Program (DSNAP).

### C. DCFS Division of Management and Finance (DM&F)

In normal operations, the DCFS DM&F will provide the management support system for the DCFS.

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In emergencies and disasters, DM&F staff will be assigned to locations as needed. In addition, DM&F will provide, upon direction of the Secretary, the procurement and logistical support required for operations and maintains a record of manpower and equipment used to cope with an emergency/disaster incident. This information may be requested by the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) to help determine the state's contribution in the event a request is made by the Governor for federal assistance.

#### **D. DCFS Executive Division**


The Secretary of the DCFS has overall responsibility for the emergency responsibilities assigned to the DCFS. DCFS emergency preparedness responsibilities are under the authority of the Secretary. The Secretary shall appoint and supervise the DCFS Emergency Preparedness Director, who will prepare and maintain plans, procedures, arrangements, and agreements to ensure that the organization will continue to carry out its mission in an emergency or disaster. See sample of [Disaster Orders](#).

##### **1. DCFS Bureau of Emergency Preparedness**

The DCFS Emergency Preparedness Director and State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Team will be responsible for compiling and maintaining a statewide shelter directory and tracking available shelters and the evacuees sheltered in them during emergencies and disasters.

In an emergency when Louisiana residents are evacuated from their homes, the DCFS Emergency Preparedness Director will mobilize DCFS resources and personnel, reassigning them to address critical needs related to mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services. The Department has established readiness procedures that ensure proper training, availability and notification of DCFS employees and availability of necessary materials and equipment in an emergency.

The DCFS Emergency Preparedness Director shall organize the emergency response activities of all DCFS Divisions before, during, and after the emergency/ disaster and make decisions related to overall staff deployment. During an emergency/disaster, the DCFS Emergency Preparedness Director, or a member of the DCFS EOC team, will be at the EOC to provide updates and guidance to the DCFS Regional

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Administrators regarding the activation and operation of the DCFS managed and supported shelters as well as address staffing issues and concerns for parish and other local general population shelters and staffed event sites.

2. DCFS Bureau of General Counsel (BGC)

The DCFS BGC provides legal counsel to DCFS executive staff as needed during a state emergency/disaster and foresees areas of potential legal liability.

3. DCFS Bureau of Communications and Governmental Affairs (BC&GA)


The DCFS BC&GA maintains ongoing public information programs concerning the policies and programs of the Department. During emergencies/disasters, the public information programs will be coordinated with the GOHSEP Public Information Office. (Refer to [DCFS Policy 1-17, DCFS Media Relations](#)).

The GOHSEP State of Louisiana Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and Executive Order [BJ 08-32](#) also assign the Department support responsibilities for communication and warning, damage assessment, donated goods, emergency direction and control, information management, mass feeding, and public information. DCFS will respond as required to carry out support responsibilities.

## E. Departmental Employees

Many DCFS employees will be assigned tasks not routinely encountered in their usual job responsibilities but which are within the realm of their responsibilities as employees of the department for management and coordination of mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services operations. These tasks relate to the emergency function of the DCFS engaged as Emergency Support Function ESF-6.

DCFS 1-02, Emergency Preparedness Policy and Procedures, indicates that the Secretary has overall responsibility for the emergency responsibilities assigned to DCFS. Pursuant to the policy, when a declared emergency/disaster occurs, the Emergency Preparedness Director is empowered to make decisions and expend resources. The power includes the ability to make decisions regarding the best use of personnel and providing directives to personnel in order to coordinate the DCFS response to the emergency/disaster. It is imperative that all

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DCFS employees adhere to this policy while DCFS responds to the situation caused by any declared disaster/emergency. The chain of command established by this policy ensures that the DCFS will be able to quickly and efficiently respond to the needs of Louisiana's residents.

#### 1. DCFS ESF-6 Operations

The DCFS, as ESF-6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services, is responsible for all DCFS employees who are subject to assignments working in shelters and other ESF – 6 mission assignments / locations during emergencies and disasters. Many DCFS employees may be required to cross parish lines in fulfilling the DCFS's mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services responsibility, if necessary.


DCFS shall make this policy available to all employees and shall document receipt of the policy by each employee. Upon receipt, each employee will be asked to sign the Emergency Preparedness Policy Acknowledgement Form ([Word version](#)/[Adobe version](#)), which includes the following statement: "I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the DCFS Emergency Preparedness Policy, 1-02; and as a DCFS employee, I understand that unless specifically granted an exemption, if needed, I will be required to work at an assigned location and/or on assigned emergency/disaster operations tasks. Such work will be performed in accordance with DCFS Policy and Procedure relating to emergency preparedness". The signed copy shall be retained in the employee's personnel file, in accordance with Office guidelines.

#### 2. 24-Hour Activation of Shelters and Other Designated Locations

Once activated, and ordered to stand up, shelters and other designated locations shall be staffed around the clock until deactivated, closed, ordered to stand down, or the need no longer exists.

#### 3. Notification and Recall Procedures

DCFS Lead Area Managers through the Regional Administrators (RAs) shall implement the DCFS's notification and recall system to notify DCFS employees when they are assigned to work under ESF-6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services. Procedures shall be developed which include the use of telephone tree listings and standby

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notification, on duty notification, stand up and stand down notification when the shelters are initiated and deactivated.

All DCFS employees are responsible for keeping their home phone numbers, pager numbers, cell phone numbers, etc. current with their supervisors.

DCFS employees will respond to calls to duty assignments as such calls are channeled through the DCFS “calling tree” for the region in question.

The State Office Section Directors and Field Regional Administrators will have responsibility for maintaining a “calling tree” for their employees and initiating it upon receipt of notice from the DCFS Secretary, or her designee, that a disaster has been declared which requires a DCFS response. Upon an employee’s receipt of a notification call via the “calling tree”, the employee shall immediately respond and/or reply to it and follow the instructions provided.

Employees reporting for duty other than for a duty assignment through the DCFS "calling tree" are considered to be volunteers and are not eligible for compensation under [DCFS Policy 4-10](#), Human Resources Procedures for Emergency/Disaster Operations or any other DCFS payment plan.

#### 4. Personal Disaster Emergency Preparedness Plan Training


The Personal Disaster Emergency Preparedness Plan [training presentation](#) must be included in the new employee orientation packet. The DCFS Safety Officers shall train all employees on developing their personal plans annually.

If a DCFS employee is unable to comply with this policy due to a lack of personal preparedness, they may be subject to disciplinary action. DCFS Human Resources will issue and maintain employee signature pages outlining their receipt of this policy.

#### 5. Exemption Policy

While DCFS recognizes its responsibilities during emergencies/disasters, the Department also recognizes that certain employees may have circumstances that would limit their ability to be of service.




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- a. An employee who judges that the severity of their personal/family situations outweigh the obligations of the state to respond to emergency situations may submit a form DCFS FRE Formal Request for Exemption ([Adobe version/Word version](#)) to be exempted from the requirements of this policy. This request should contain sufficient information to explain why the employee is not able to perform this job duty.
- b. If the request for a temporary or permanent exemption is for personal health reasons and/or medical condition, form DCFS EJ 1 Emergency Duty Exemption Request ([Adobe version/Word version](#)) shall also be submitted with the request for exemption. An employee must answer all questions on the request for exemption or the request maybe rejected due to insufficient information.
- c. DCFS reserves the right to verify the existence of personal/family demands.
- d. An employee with a pre-existing condition or situation shall submit the form DCFS FRE Formal Request for Exemption ([Adobe version/Word version](#)) in advance of a disaster/emergency. Submit the completed form with attachments by 01FEB of the current year, directly to the DCFS Division of Management and Finance (DM&F)/ Human Resource Section. The mailing address is:

DCFS Division of Management and Finance  
Human Resources Section  
P.O. Box 3776  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

**Note: An employee who develops a new condition/situation should submit their Formal Request for Exemption as soon as the condition/situation develops.**

**Any medical information submitted will be kept confidential to the extent possible.**

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The employee should also submit a courtesy copy of the form to the immediate supervisor.

- e. DM&F Human Resources Section will convene a committee that will serve as the approving authority to review all exemption requests.

Once a decision is made on a request for exemption, DM&F Human Resources Section will:

- Record the decision on the DCFS FRE Formal Request for Exemption form. Maintain the original form and provide a copy to the employee. **(Note: The employee should submit a courtesy copy of the approved exemption letter only to his/her immediate supervisor; however, no specific medical information should be included.)**
  - Enter the decision into a database and share the updated database with the Emergency Preparedness Director, Emergency Preparedness Assistant Director, Emergency/ Disaster Lead Area Managers, Human Resource Liaisons, Regional Administrators and State Office Section Directors.
- f. Appeals of exemption decisions must be submitted within 15 working days of receipt of the decision along with documentation to support the appeal to the DCFS Undersecretary or designee. All decisions rendered by the DCFS Undersecretary, or his/ her designee are final.
  - g. An approved request for exemption is valid from the date of approval through **31 JANUARY** of the following year or earlier as determined appropriate by the approving authority. An exemption is not normally granted for more than one (1) year. This approval will take into consideration the circumstances of the employee and the duration of the condition/situation that prompted the employee to request an exemption. In cases where the physician certifies that the condition is likely to be permanent, a permanent exemption may be granted. It is the employee's responsibility to advise their supervisor and the DCFS Human Resources Section in



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writing of changes that would impact the original exemption decision. It is also the employee's responsibility to reapply for an exemption either prior to or following the expiration date of an exemption approval. In the event a permanent exemption is granted, documentation will be recorded and maintained by DCFS Human Resources.

- h. Requests for exemptions will be processed within fifteen (15) working days provided all supporting documentation is made available with the submission of the request. If additional documentation is necessary, the request will be processed within fifteen (15) working days following receipt of additional documentation.

#### 6. DCFS Human Resources Procedures for Disaster Operations

Refer to [DCFS Policy 4-10 Human Resources Procedures for Emergency Disaster Operations](#) for policy and procedures relating to overtime compensation for DCFS employees who are designated to work in an emergency preparedness, response or recovery activity.


An employee's inappropriate actions, poor performance, etc., during an emergency/disaster event may result in disciplinary action according to [DCFS Policy 4-07, Disciplinary Corrective Actions and Separations](#).

### III. REFERENCES

Executive Orders [BJ 08-32](#), signed by Governor Bobby Jindal on August 27, 2008, and [BJ 08-94](#) signed September 4, 2008, reaffirms GOHSEP's statutory responsibilities regarding emergency management and assigns primary and supporting functional responsibilities to state departments and agencies. Each state department assigned a primary emergency function is responsible for coordinating the planning and response activities of the support agencies under that emergency function.

[BJ 08-32](#) also assigns the DCFS support responsibilities for communication and warning, damage assessment, donated goods, emergency direction and control, information management, mass feeding, and public information. DCFS will respond as required to carry out support responsibilities.

DCFS has been assigned the primary emergency function of Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services during emergencies and disasters (Emergency Support Function ESF-6).

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DCFS will adhere to the requirements of the [State Emergency Operations Plan](#) (EOP) and Executive Orders [BJ 08-32](#) and [BJ 08-94](#) in implementing and fulfilling its emergency support function responsibilities during emergencies and disasters.


As the primary state agency assigned mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services coordination responsibilities, the DCFS has developed the [DCFS ESF-6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services Annex](#) which is an Annex to the State EOP. The Annex contains the Department's concept of operations and the assignment of responsibilities in the mass care, emergency assistance, housing, and human services function. The DCFS is responsible for fulfilling its obligations as presented in the State EOP and the Department's Annex.

Each department assigned an emergency function must coordinate its efforts through the GOHSEP Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during an emergency/disaster. The EOC, the command and communications center for response operations, during an emergency/disaster, is located at the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, 7667 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

## EVENT SITES

The DCFS managed and supported shelters and event sites include but are not limited to the following:

- Critical Transportation Needs Shelters
- Medical Special Needs Shelters
- Special Population Shelter
- Parish Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Parish Pick up Points
- DSNAP Sites
- DCFS Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- State Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- DOTD Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

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## ACRONYMS

Following are meanings of frequently used acronyms appearing in this policy statement:

*EOC* — Emergency Operations Center

*EOP* — Emergency Operations Plan

*GOHSEP* — Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

*OEP* — Office of Emergency Preparedness

*RA* — Regional Administrator

In addition the following documents are available:

- [DCFS Policy 4-10 Human Resources Procedures for Emergency Disaster Operations](#)
- [DCFS Emergency Management Plan Operating Procedures](#)
- [DCFS Shelter Training PowerPoint \(2013\)](#)
- [DCFS Disaster Travel Emergency Preparedness PowerPoint](#)
- [Emergency Preparedness Travel Checklist](#)

## IV. FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

- DCFS-EJ 1 – Emergency Duty Exemption Request ([Word version](#)/[Adobe version](#)) and Instructions
- DCFS-FRE-Formal Request for Exemption ([Word version](#)/[Adobe version](#)) and Instructions